



Haverhill Area Working Party 10 June 2010

Haverhill Partnership Questionnaire: Summary of Returns

1. Introduction

- 1.1 According to the membership database there are 14 members of the Executive Group and 61 members of the Forum. In total we had 23 questionnaires returned. 11 of these said they were members of the Forum, 2 said they were members of the Executive Group and 9 said they were members of both. 1 person did not specify. The majority of respondents had attended at least two out of four meetings in the last year.

2. Findings

2.1 What do people gain from being involved in Partnership?

- 2.1.1 (a) the majority of respondents agreed that the Forum was a good way of finding out what is going on in the town (20 people) and for meeting other people working in the town (22 people); and
- (b) the majority felt they got information at the Forum that they would not get anywhere else (17) and used it to keep their organisation up to date with what was happening in the town (15).
- 2.1.2 Text responses regarding the specific benefits of being involved in the Partnership highlighted networking; the opportunity to raise the profile of their organisation; information sharing; understanding the community/needs of the town.

2.2 Role of Partnership

- 2.2.1 (a) 14 people agreed they were clear about the role of the Partnership and 11 were clear about the role of the Executive Group;
- (b) 11 people disagreed that the Partnership should focus on specific issues with a further 8 neither agreeing nor disagreeing; and
- (c) 14 agreed that the Partnership is effective at influencing decisions affecting the town and 17 agreed that the Partnership has made a difference to local people and communities.

2.2.2 People were asked to say whether they thought the Partnership had been successful in meeting the aims and objectives as set out in the Constitution. Views were mixed, particularly the Partnership's success in relation to:-

- (a) improvement of employment prospects;
- (b) enhancing competitiveness of Haverhill companies;
- (c) meeting housing needs; and
- (d) reducing crime and improving community safety.

2.2.3 It was felt that some of these were outside the scope of influence of the Partnership or that the Partnership was not the appropriate forum for addressing some of the aims set out in the constitution. Some felt that the aims were too generic and that the Partnership would benefit from focussing on a few agreed key issues and linking up more with the West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership (WSLSP). One respondent felt that the Partnership had not been successful in achieving its aims and was a public sector talking shop while another commented that the Partnership had not changed things and projects to address these aims would have happened anyway. They questioned whether the Partnership added any value.

2.2.4 It was felt that the Partnership's ability to influence actions was limited due to little direct control of funds.

2.3 **Content of Forum meetings**

- 2.3.1 (a) just over half of all respondents felt the Forum was a good place to raise issues affecting their organisation (13); and
- (b) opinion was divided over whether a lot of the discussions at the Forum meetings were relevant to them/their organisation. 7 agreed that they were relevant, 8 disagreed and 8 neither agreed nor disagreed.

2.4 **Membership and Structure of the Partnership**

2.4.1 15 people agreed that the Partnership would benefit from more involvement from the business community. However, the feedback from a business representative was that the Forum in particular is not relevant enough for business people to take time out of their working day to attend.

2.4.2 The majority of people felt that the Exec Group/Forum structure was appropriate but there was a suggestion that the future structure would depend on the future priorities of the group. It was also suggested that the Exec Group continues to meet 4 times a year but the Forum only meets twice a year. Someone else commented that some items could be better reported to the Forum.

2.4.3 Several people commented that the Forum meeting may be getting too big and that maybe there should be a limited number of representatives from a single organisation. It was felt that the Forum has become a very large body with relatively few members contributing to the business of the Partnership.

- 2.4.4 In terms of the membership of the Executive Group, there were several suggestions:-
- (a) more representation from voluntary sector, is HAVO still able to represent breadth of voluntary sector in Haverhill?
 - (b) Haverhill in Bloom to be represented as they are one of the groups trying to improve the appearance of the town;
 - (c) Needs someone from the youth sector or education;
 - (d) inclusion of a Suffolk County Councillor;
 - (e) representative from local church groups as they are very involved in local community; and
 - (f) ability to request different organisations to be involved where relevant in order to improve Exec Group's understanding of specific issues.
- 2.4.5 There was a suggestion that it should be one vote per partner (at present Town and Borough Councils have two seats). It was also suggested that if organisations do not attend regularly they should have their seats withdrawn and that if individuals cannot attend they should send a representative. It was commented that NHS Suffolk only tend to be involved in the Partnership when they present on a specific issue at the Forum.

2.5 **The Partnership's relationship with the Haverhill Area Working Party (HAWP) and other partnerships**

- 2.5.1 The majority of people felt unable to comment on this due to their lack of understanding about the role of HAWP and some were not aware of HAWP at all. However, it was suggested that there was not a need for 2 groups if they have similar aims.
- 2.5.2 It was suggested that there needs to be stronger links with the WSLSP and that we need to look at whether the Haverhill Partnership, HAWP and Suffolk County Council's locality arrangements can be brought together.

3. **The Future**

- 3.1
- (a) 12 people agreed that the format of the Forum meetings does not need to change with a further 9 neither agreeing nor disagreeing;
 - (b) only 2 people agreed that they would be more likely to attend if the meetings were held in the evening;
 - (c) 12 people disagreed that the information shared at Forum meetings could be shared via a newsletter instead with one person commenting that this approach would not enable questions and two-way dialogue;

- (d) 17 agreed that the Partnership should be more involved in decisions about how public money is spent in the town but fewer agreed that the Partnership should take more responsibility for delivering projects (11); and
- (e) 7 people agreed that they would be prepared to commit more time to the work of the Partnership and 8 disagreed.

4. Recommendation

4.1 The Working Party is requested to **NOTE** the content of this report.

For further information, please contact:-

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